



ASSUME THE LEGUME!

When people contact me and ask me about trimming down their food budget, the first thing I usually ask is, “How often do you eat beans?” The answer is almost always not enough.

Beans are delicious, cheap, and healthy and there’s just no reason why people shouldn’t be eating more of them. Because these dinners are all quick, I opted for canned beans in the recipes, but be sure to check the side bar in Meal 1 to learn more about cooking dry beans in big batches. And don’t worry, I used a variety of different beans in varying amounts so you won’t get sick of the legumes.

Macheesmo Meals



Helpful Equipment:

- Baking Sheet
- Slotted spoon
- Tongs
- Meat Thermometer
- Immersion Blender
- Food Processor or Blender
- Microplane Zester



You can click on these to zap you to Amazon and see my recommendation for each.

MEAL 1	MEAL 2	MEAL 3	BONUS!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Bean Taco Salad • Spicy Corn Tortilla Strips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinto Bean & Yam Quesadillas • Corn Salsa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cauliflower & Bean Salad • Herb Roasted Salmon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Bean Pasta Salad • Game Time Bean Dip



MEAL 1 | Black Bean Taco Salad with Tortilla Strips

Taco salads are all the rage these days. Certain fast food spots that rhyme with Kipotle charge \$7-\$8 for this salad and you can make enough to feed a family for roughly the same amount.

Black Bean Taco Salad

Yield: Serves 4 | **Time:** 30 minutes.

Ingredients:

- 2 15-ounce cans black beans
- 1/2 small red onion, diced
- 1 ear sweet corn
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 lime, juice only
- 1 large head green lettuce
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 avocado, diced
- 6 ounces pepper jack cheese, cubed
- 1/2 cup fresh salsa (pico de gallo)
- Fresh cilantro, garnish

Directions:

- 1) Drain black beans and rinse them well. Stir black beans together with diced onion, corn kernels, olive oil, cumin, oregano, chili powder, salt, and lime juice.
- 2) Wash and dry lettuce, roughly chop lettuce, and divide between four plates.
- 3) Divide bean mixture between four plates and top with tomatoes, avocado, cubed cheese, a few tablespoons of salsa, and fresh cilantro.
- 4) Finally, garnish salad with tortilla strips and serve immediately!

Spicy Tortilla Strips

Yield: Serves 4 | **Time:** 20 minutes.

Ingredients:

- 8 small (6-inch) corn tortillas
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 lime, juice only

Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Slice tortillas into 1/4-inch slices. Then chop the slices in half so each strip is about 3 inches long.
- 2) Toss tortilla strips with olive oil, chili powder, salt, and lime juice.
- 3) Spread tortillas out on a baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees F. until the tortillas are lightly browned and crispy. Stir them once after 4-5 minutes. They will probably need 10 minutes to crisp up completely.
- 4) Let strips cool and they will continue to crisp up. Then top on salad.



Cooking Dried Beans

I use a lot of canned beans when I cook because they are fast and I don't need to plan ahead to use them. Open. Drain. Rinse. Use.

That said, if I have the time nothing beats starting with dried beans. They are dirt cheap and you can flavor them however you want while they cook. They also have a better texture, in my opinion, than the canned variety because they haven't been sitting in liquid for weeks.

If you have the time and want to try them, cooking dried beans is pretty easy. Most dried beans (black, pinto, etc.) you'll need to soak overnight or quick soak in hot water for an hour or two. Then add the soaked beans to a large pot and cover with water. You can add an onion, some dried chiles, and garlic to the pot. Simmer the beans until they are fork tender, which will probably take around an hour.



Plan This Meal!

30 minutes ahead - Preheat oven and prep tortilla strips.

20 minutes ahead - Start baking strips and prepare salad toppings.

5 minutes ahead - Remove strips to cool and finish topping salads!



MEAL 2 | Pinto Bean & Yam Quesadillas with Corn Salsa

These are a riff on one of my favorite taco recipes that combine chorizo with yams and poblano peppers. This recipe is even easier than those tacos though and still has a ton of flavor. The corn salsa goes great and you'll probably have leftover that you can save for a snack with chips.

Pinto Bean and Yam Quesadilla

Yield: Serves 4 | **Time:** 30 minutes.

Ingredients:

- 1 large yam
- 1/2 white onion, diced
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and diced
- 1 (15-ounce) can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 8 ounces pepper jack cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 large flour tortillas

Directions:

1) Take a fork and poke a few holes in the yam and then wrap it in a paper towel. Microwave the yam on high for five minutes. Then let the yam cool and peel and roughly cube the yam into 1/4-inch cubes.

2) Add a drizzle of oil to a medium skillet over medium heat. Then add onions and diced (seeded) jalapeno. Cook for a few minutes until onions are soft and season with a pinch of salt.

3) Stir in drained and rinsed pinto beans to the skillet along with cubed yams. Cook the mixture for a few minutes, just to combine flavors.

4) Remove the yam mixture from the skillet and wipe it clean with a paper towel. Add a fresh drizzle of oil to the skillet and place a large tortilla down in the skillet. Add a few spoonfuls of yam mixture to the tortilla and top with some grated cheddar cheese.

5) Fold the tortilla over and cook for about 3-4 minutes per side until the cheese is melted and the tortilla is lightly browned on both sides.

If you have a large skillet, you can actually do two quesadillas at a time by making one, moving it to one side as you fold it, and then starting another in the other side of the pan.

Fresh Corn Salsa

Yield: Serves 4 | **Time:** 20 minutes.

Ingredients:

- 2 ears sweet corn
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1/4 cup chives, minced
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1/2 lime, juice only
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Pinch of salt

Directions:

1) Shuck corn and slice kernels off the cob. It's best to do this in a bowl so the kernels don't fling all over the place.

2) Stir sweet corn together with other ingredients. Add a drizzle of oil and season with salt.

3) It's best to let this sit for a few minutes before serving so the flavors can mingle.

This is obviously made to be served over the quesadillas, but it's also excellent with chips if you have leftovers.



Plan This Meal!

30 minutes ahead - Microwave yam and make corn salsa.

15 minutes ahead - Start making quesadillas!

5 minutes ahead - You can keep cooked quesadillas warm in an oven while you make the others. Then serve the salsa over the 'dillas!



No Fresh Corn?

If fresh corn is already out of season in your neck of the woods (SAD), then you can use frozen corn for the salsa. Just thaw it and proceed as normal.

Stay away from canned corn. It'll be too soggy for the salsa.

Fresh sweet corn is definitely best though if you can still find it.



Quesadilla Method 101

This is how I make quesadillas.

I put one tortilla in the pan, add the filling and cheese, and fold it over. Then I set the second tortilla on top of the first so it is basically half on the skillet and half on the first quesadilla. Then I fold that one over so I have two quesadillas cooking.

I'll keep those two 'dillas warm in a 250 degree F. oven while I cook the last two 'dillas.



MEAL 3 | Quick Cauliflower and Bean Salad with Salmon

Even though there is a salad as the base for meal 1, I actually think this is the lightest and healthiest meal in this week's plan. Don't think that it won't fill you up though. The beans and cauliflower are very filling and the salmon adds a nice protein to the mix.

Cauliflower and Bean Salad

Yield: Serves 6 | Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 lemon, juice and zest
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 head cauliflower
- 1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans drained and rinsed
- 1 fennel bulb, sliced thin
- 1/4 cup fresh chives, minced
- Salt and pepper

Directions:

- 1) Heat olive oil in small skillet over low heat. Remove the thyme leaves from the sprigs (use your thumbs) and add to the oil. Cook in the oil for a few minutes until fragrant. Then remove from heat.
- 2) Zest lemon and set zest aside in a small bowl. Add juice to a bowl with vinegar and thyme oil and whisk together well.
- 3) Chop cauliflower into tiny bite-sized florets or pieces and remove the tough stem pieces. Also slice fennel bulb into thin slices.
- 4) Combine cauliflower, fennel, and beans together in a large bowl. Drizzle in dressing and stir to combine. Add chives and season with salt and pepper. Stir to combine and adjust seasoning to your liking.

Herb Roasted Salmon

Yield: 4 Servings | Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1-1 1/2 pounds salmon, skin on
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 lemon, sliced into thin coins
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill
- Pinch of kosher salt

Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 400° F. Place your salmon skin-side down on a baking sheet. Run your fingers down the middle of the salmon and make sure there are no pin bones. Most butchers will remove them for you, but if you need to remove them yourself, the best tool to do so is a clean pair of tweezers and a good dose of patience.
- 2) Once salmon is de-boned, drizzle the entire piece of fish with olive oil. Sprinkle lightly with kosher salt. Slice the lemon into thin coins and dot the fish with the lemon pieces. Then sprinkle the surface of the fish with fresh dill.
- 3) Bake fish for 18 minutes at 400° Fahrenheit. This should be just enough time to cook it through. If your salmon filet is particularly thick, it might need another few minutes. When it is done, the salmon should flake apart easily.
- 4) Slice salmon into servings. If you want to remove skin before serving, use a spatula to slide between the salmon skin and flesh for easy removal.



Plan This Meal!

In Advance - Make sure the pin bones are removed from your salmon filet. Your butcher might be nice enough to do this for you. In any event, there's nothing worse than coming home after a long day's work and plucking pin bones for 10 minutes.

30 minutes left - Prep salmon and get it roasting.

20 minutes left - Make salad.

5 minutes left - Divide salad between plates. Cut salmon into serving sizes and serve salmon over cauliflower salad.



Blanched Cauliflower?

I really like the crunch from the raw cauliflower in this salad, but if that sounds like a bit much to you, you can easily blanch the cauliflower and make this a warm salad.

Bring a medium pot of water to boil with a big pinch of salt. Add the cauliflower florets and simmer for a few minutes. Then drain and let cool for a few minutes. The cauliflower should be softer, but not mushy completely.

Toss the cauliflower with the other salad ingredients.



BONUS! | Lunch Salad and a Game Time Dip!

These rice wraps are the perfect weekday lunch: healthy and filling. The salsa is different than most salsa and is actually better if you can let it chill for a day in the fridge. It's great for game day.

White Bean Pasta Salad

Yield: Serves 8 | Time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. orecchiette pasta
- 1 cup kalamata olives, diced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 red onion, sliced thin
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, minced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini beans
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Directions:

- 1) Cook pasta according to package instructions until it's al dente. Be sure to not overcook it.
- 2) Chop olives, tomatoes, onions, and basil.
- 3) Toss the veggies together with the cooked pasta and beans in a big bowl and add olive oil. Taste for salt and pepper.
- 4) Serve hot or cold.

Bean and Cheese Game Day Dip

Yield: Serves 8 | Time: 30 min.

Ingredients:

- 1 red pepper, minced
- 1 poblano pepper, minced
- 1 jalapeno, minced
- 1/2 white onion, minced
- 6 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 cans pinto beans
- 1 can black beans
- 1/2 - 1 Cup water
- 8 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 Teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt and pepper
- Cilantro, garnish
- Tortilla chips

Directions:

- 1) Mince up veggies into very small pieces. If you have a processor, just give them a quick whirl in the food processor until they are minced, but definitely not a paste.
- 2) Melt butter in a medium pot over medium heat and when hot, add all the veggies. Cook for about 5 minutes until veggies are soft.
- 3) Drain and rinse beans and add to veggie mixture. Cook for a few minutes until beans are really soft.
- 4) Either use a processor or blender to blend up the entire mixture until smooth, or add the water to the pot and mash up the beans with a fork or masher until they are pretty smooth. If you're blending or processing, add water until smooth. If you don't have a processor the dip may not end up quite as smooth, but just call it rustic and eat it anyway.
- 7) Add dip back to the pot if you processed it and heat over low heat. Add the cheese to the pot and stir until melted. Add cumin and taste for salt and pepper.
- 8) Serve immediately with cilantro and chips. The dip is great warm or cold.



Feedback!

I'm always anxious for feedback. If you have any feedback of any individual meal or the meal plans as a whole, please let me know! You can email me directly at nick@macheesmo.com.



SHOPPING LIST

This is a full list of all the ingredients used in every meal in this week's plan. I recommend reviewing it for stuff you probably already have on hand before rushing out to the store and buying everything! If items on the list don't have amounts, it is most likely because the recipe uses a very small amount of that ingredient or it is used as a garnish.

Fresh Produce

- Avocado (2)
- Cauliflower (1 small head)
- Cherry tomatoes (2 pints)
- Cilantro
- Fresh basil (1/4 cup)
- Fresh chives (1/2 cup)
- Fresh dill (1 Tbsp.)
- Fresh thyme (2 sprigs)
- Fennel (1 bulb)
- Green leaf lettuce (1 head)
- Jalapeno (2)
- Lemon (2)
- Lime (1 1/2)
- Poblano pepper (1)
- Red onion (1)
- Red pepper (1)
- Sweet corn (3 ear)
- White onion (1)
- Yam (1 large)

Meat, Poultry, Seafood

- Salmon filet, skin on (1-1.5 lb.)

Dairy

- Unsalted butter (6 Tbsp.)
- Cheddar cheese (8 oz.)
- Pepper Jack cheese (14 oz.)

Spices and Pantry Items

- Black beans (3 15-oz. cans)
- Black pepper
- Cannellini beans (3 15-oz. cans)
- Chili powder (1 1/2 teas.)
- Corn tortillas (8 6-inch)
- Dried oregano (1 teas.)
- Flour tortillas (4 large)
- Fresh salsa (1/2 cup)
- Ground cumin (1 1/2 teas.)
- Kalamata olives (1 cup)
- Kosher salt
- Olive oil (1 cup + 2 Tbsp.)
- Orecchiette pasta (1 lb.)
- Pinto beans (3 15-oz. can)
- Red wine vinegar (2 Tbsp.)
- Tortilla chips